

Tacoma's families gain from knowledge gathered by *Open Doors*

By Elizabeth Watson, University of Washington

Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) staff members in the Eastside neighborhood of Tacoma are involved in a new and exciting partnership called the "Open Doors for Families" project.

Open Doors is a partnership between researchers at the University of Washington's Human Services Policy Center (UWHSPC), Children's Home Society of Washington, DCFS, and the Eastside Family Support Center.

A variety of community stakeholders, including the Tacoma School District and the Prevention Partnership for Children, were also involved in the initial project setup.

The name "Open Doors" came from public opinion research conducted by UWHSPC. The goal of this research was to determine Washington citizens' beliefs about a wide range of issues related to child protection, and to develop effective language for communicating about child protection policies.

The goals of this project are:

- To inform people of the wide range of services for children and families (including but not limited to CPS) that are available in their community.
- To learn more about the Eastside community's culturally diverse residents, and through this knowledge to create a plan for service redesign which will be submitted to the 2000 state legislature.
- To assure that children at high risk of

child abuse and neglect are referred to CPS, but that other families in need of help are referred to community-based family support services.

Larry Pederson, area administrator for DCFS in Tacoma, says that *Open Doors* gets state employees in touch with the living, breathing pulse of the community in which they work, and allows the community to see state employees as helpful, concerned, and accessible individuals.

For the longer term, helping to develop and networking with the neighborhood's "natural helpers," will assist families before they need CPS intervention, or ensure sustained support for families after cases are closed.

"Open Doors gets state employees in touch with the living, breathing pulse of the community in which they work..."

Community Information Sessions

To accomplish project goals, Open Doors has held "community information sessions" with Asian, Hispanic, and Russian parenting groups, as well as a "panel discussion" with parents of neighborhood

elementary school children.

These sessions were co-facilitated by CHSW, Eastside Family Support Center (EFSC) and DCFS staff, and were an opportunity for

agency personnel and members of the community to learn more about each other.

CPS worker Judy Mitchell co-facilitated two sessions with Spanish-speaking parents. She observed that what some staff have viewed as resistance from some parents is really "cultural confusion." Children run free in the neighborhoods in Mexico, watched by all the adults. Allowing one's young child to roam unsupervised through his apartment complex in Tacoma might bring a CPS worker to the door.

Parenting practices that prepare children for life in their homeland are seen as "wrong" in the U.S.

Mark Widaman, CPS worker, co-facilitated a session with Cambodian parents. He gained an appreciation for how difficult it is to parent in the traditional ways when children are rapidly acculturating. Members of the group told us that in Cambodia a teacher could punish a child physically, up to the point of breaking a bone or putting out an eye.

Their children have told them they will be arrested if they spank, so parents have been afraid to administer any discipline. Mark believes that small group sessions are valuable in educating non-English speaking parents about what is appropriate discipline here in the U.S., and where to ask for help with parenting.

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Statewide customer service survey finds some pleasantly surprising results

In a recent statewide customer service survey, nine out of 10 times citizens said that in the end they got what they needed from state employees, without error by a staff that was courteous, competent and respectful.

The Governor's office contracted with Washington State University Research Center to conduct a statewide telephone survey in July and August. The survey was to determine the quality of service provided by state agencies and identify customer expectations for services. A total of 874 households were surveyed with a sample error of plus/minus five percent.

Some of the highlights:

1. Government has a more difficult task providing services than private sector - 66%
2. The quality of services has improved over the last two years - 60%
3. Employees treat public fairly regardless of age, gender, race, culture, or ability - 71%
4. State employees who deal directly with the public are properly trained and qualified - 59%
5. The most important aspect of services -
 - 63% say ability of staff to solve problems with you
 - 18% say how long you have to wait to receive service
6. Four out of five times state services get a good overall grade.

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Secretary's
corner
by Lyle Quasim



Words about our work

Employees, clients, and the public share thoughts on the work we do

Send your thoughts and/or letters from clients to Secretary Lyle Quasim, attention: Letters to The News Connection, P.O. Box (Mailstop) 45010, Olympia WA 98504; via e-mail Quasil@dshs.wa.gov



It is always important for people to get feedback from their employer. As Secretary of DSHS, I am no different. Each year I meet with Gov. Gary Locke to discuss my Performance Agreement and establish new performance goals for the next year.

In my agreement with the Governor for this year, I have nine broad areas of focus. They are:

- Self-sufficiency (Advancing self-sufficiency and improving the quality of life for individuals and families in need)
- Client health and safety (Helping children and vulnerable adults lead healthy and secure lives)
- Public safety (Protecting citizens from dangerous behaviors)
- Quality improvement (Improving and streamlining our processes to achieve our mission)
- E-commerce (streamlining processes to achieve our mission)
- Diversity (Providing respectful, culturally-appropriate services to Washington residents)
- Regulatory Reform
- Customer Service
- Innovation

Over the past two years throughout DSHS, you have been working increasingly within a quality context, as individuals and as members of teams. All these efforts have been focused on finding better, more efficient and effective ways to serve our clients.

As the Governor is fond of saying, “We’re not done yet.” During this year, we in DSHS will be continuing these efforts as we look for ways to streamline DSHS. And, we will have an increased emphasis on customer satisfaction.

As we work within a quality approach, I want us never to lose sight of the client. The 1.2 million people we serve each year are what we are about. That’s why we’re here, doing what we do. They count on us to serve them quickly, efficiently, without errors and with respect.

We have many challenges over the next year. There are always more needs than resources. We must continue to ask ourselves, “Is what I’m doing furthering the mission of DSHS to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in need?”

I have no doubt that the people of DSHS will continue to show the people of Washington how worthwhile their investment in DSHS is.

Lyle Quasim

Dear Secretary Lyle Quasim,

As all of us know, DSHS is under constant scrutiny for the work we do. When the outcome of our work sometimes goes wrong, the press are the first to point out our failures. But we rarely are able to share our successes. I am proud to work with excellent staff who not only take great pride in their work, but are very caring people who always strive to do their best. I want to share with you a recent case where things “worked.”

On a recent Friday afternoon, a very distraught young woman, whom I will call Sally, came into the (Lake City) Community Services Office, sharing that she had attempted suicide the night before, but decided not to follow through after taking 20 pain pills.

She left the office to pick up her seven-year-old son, agreeing to return to enter treatment.

When she did not return right away, CSO staff as well as the police went looking for her. Eventually staff found her and she agreed to come to the office to meet with the county mental health professionals (CMHP).

Sally shared that she had recently purchased a gun and that she and her son would be better off in heaven. Sally agreed to have her son taken care of by her parents, if they were willing to do so since she had severed ties with her family. The CMHPs then took Sally directly to the hospital.

CSO staff met with the grandparents, arranged child care for the boy and notified Child Protective Services of the threat. Children’s Services responded immediately. The above process took much negotiating and outstanding effort by many CSO and mental health staff, requiring many to extend their work day to assure everyone’s safety.

The case continued to be worked by CSO staff, CPS, and mental health providers. Over the next few days, CSO staff attended discharge planning meetings and dependency hearings. Staff negotiated with the landlord to allow Sally to return to her residence.

CPS and the CSO staff continue to work together to formulate the best plan for both the child and mother. The responsiveness

and teamwork on the part of all parties was impressive!

At this time, Sally has been released from the hospital and appears to be stable. The child has remained with grandparents and hearings are scheduled to determine the best place for the child to be cared for. While we do not know the long-term results, we are continuing to work closely with all parties.

I want to express my appreciation to the many staff who went well beyond what was necessary to assist this family: CSO Social Services Staff **Vinh Huynh, Rich Parker, Debbie Scott, Trung Tang, Sarah Sullivan**; Case Manager **Doris Bennett**; Child Welfare Services Social Worker **Gerald Bennett**; mental health professionals **Char McKinley, Wanda Wright, and Jennifer Conner**, as well as staff from **Overlake Hospital**.

Their outstanding work very possibly saved two lives!

Sincerely,
Pat Smith, Administrator
Lake City Community Svcs. Office

Reaching out to the community, Belltown staff ensure children of homeless families have clothing and more

Staff at the Belltown Community Services Office (CSO) work in the heart of downtown Seattle. They have a history of reaching out to the neighboring community where many of their clients live, not always in homes.

As part of their outreach to homeless families, they are now volunteering on Thursdays to ensure the Baby Boutique is open one more day each week.

The Baby Boutique provides free disposable diapers, new and gently-used clothing (sizes 0-8), books, children’s furniture and equipment for these children. It is operated by Family Services of King County, a nonprofit multi-service agency offering a variety of counseling-based programs and services at several sites throughout Seattle.

Families access the Boutique by appointment and through referrals from other community agencies. There were only enough

volunteers to open the boutique four days a week Monday through Wednesday, plus Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

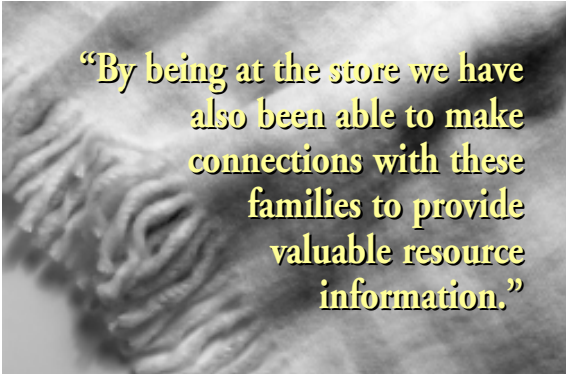
The volunteers from the Belltown CSO now open and operate the store every Thursday, rotating volunteers so that most of the staff work one Thursday each month.

“As volunteers, we sort donated items and assist the customers visiting the store with their shopping needs,” said Dorella Owens, community resources program manager. “By being at the store we have also been able to make connections with these families to provide valuable resource information.”

Having the Belltown CSO across from the store has also been a plus.

“On one of our Thursdays, a mother and her two children were

referred,” said Owens. “They had slept in their car the night before, having fled an abusive situation. The children were still in their pajamas. Not only was clothing provided for the children, but also



the mother was taken across the street to the CSO to have the family planning nurse check out her physical and mental condition.

“A referral was made to a domestic shelter by a family social worker. Office staff donated gas money so this family could get to the shelter and a safe environment.”

Sharing our successes and commitment to reaching beyond the expected to the excellent

Quality IN DSHS

Better business practices benefit clients

MAKING IT EASIER TO SERVE OUR CLIENTS

When thinking about quality improvement projects within DSHS, service programs that have direct impact to client health and safety come to mind. It might not be so automatic to think of the many tasks that are done behind the scene in support of these services. Typically categorized as “administrative processes,” they include personnel, payroll, contracts, information technology, budget, word processing, supplies, training, etc. For these services, the customers are DSHS employees.

One definition of process improvement is “finding a better way to do your job.” Staff involved in administrative processes not only find a better way to do their job, but look for ways of making it easier for their customers’ to do theirs. They do this by implementing processes that streamline tasks, eliminate unnecessary inspection and approval steps, increase responsiveness, reduce delays, and empower appropriate level decision-making. Improving these processes can make the difference between frustration and ease in carrying out the work of the agency.

In this issue of *The NewsConnection*, you will read about a number of projects that improve business processes throughout the agency.

SWAT TEAM GOES AFTER FOOD STAMP ACCURACY

The 1996 food stamp error rate was 14.8 percent, the highest in the nation. Gov. Gary Locke set a goal for the Community Services Division (CSD) to achieve an error rate not to exceed seven percent.

In an effort to partner with CSD, the Division of Fraud Investigations (DFI), Food Stamp Statewide Accuracy Team (SWAT) was initiated in Region 4.

The SWAT team concept arose from the need to quickly address a high volume of Fraud Early Detections (FRED) referrals. The current method of referrals to a single FRED investigator would not provide enough resources to significantly impact the potential error rate.

DFI presented the SWAT team approach to Community Services Offices (CSO) administrators. A joint team of CSO and DFI staff identified the cases to be looked at, using resources such as the Special Review of Eligibility (SLAM Report), which identifies clients who have shelter expenses that exceed monthly income or are within \$50 of monthly income.

The SWAT team, which has from five to 14 FRED investigators, went into a CSO for two-three days. All referrals were investigated, written up, and returned to the CSO within one week.

The SWAT team model has been used across the state.

Results

- 2,014 referrals were generated and completed by the Region 3 and 4 SWAT team.
- These referrals were added to the investigator’s regular caseload.
- The effort further strengthened the partnership between DFI and CSO staff.
- 46 percent of completed referrals resulted in termination, reduction or denial of potential food stamp errors. The remaining 54 percent have been investigated.

- \$5.4 million has been saved annually in the financial, medical and food stamp programs.
- 8,265 FTE hours were saved annually for caseworkers in Region 3.

Team members: Rob Andrzejewski, Mark Anderson, Bill Bentler, Lowell Bieber, Jerry Chastain, Ed Dahlquist, Rick Gaynor, Lisa Harvill, Cheri Lucas, Patti Martinez, Pat Park, Greg Powell, Cheri Ramirez, John Thompson, and John Williams.

RECORD RETENTION REVISION SAVES TIME AND SPACE (DCS)

Many of the child support case files in the Olympia Field Office have been difficult to manage because they contain large quantities of documents, many of which are not necessary or are otherwise irrelevant.

Much of the information is available on the DCS Support Enforcement Management System (SEMS). A Support Enforcement Officer (SEO) has an average caseload of 600 cases and
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Team members: (Back row, from left) Tim Rockett, K.K. Wong, Dick Libbey, Peggy McNeil; (front row, from left) Rosemary Hartke, Terry Trana, Becky Spitzer, Ellen Wahlen, and Sharon Wescott. (Not pictured: Cheryl O’Grady, John Brandon, Joyce Connell, Abby Michaels, and Bob Pearson)

Coordinating quality throughout DSHS



The quality coordinators are (from left): Secretary Lyle Quasim, Alice Liou, (Management Services Administration), Cheryl Stephani (DSHS Internal Quality Consultant) Roxie Schalliol (behind Cheryl)(Economic Services Administration), Tamisha Garrett (Medical Assistance Administration), Lois Felber (Health and Rehabilitative Services Administration), Barb Conley (Executive Management), Solomon Uwadike (DSHS Executive Management Consultant), Deanna Rankos (Aging and Adult Services Administration), Bob Lichtenberg (HRSA, Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing), and Carol Knobel-Ames (HRSA, Mental Health Division). Not pictured are: Katie Cameron (AASA), Chris Trujillo (Children’s Administration), Margaret Vogeli (ESA, Division of Child Support), Bill Ward (ESA, Community Services Division), Wes Hamilton (HRSA, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse), Sandy Adams (HRSA, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation), Charlotte McDowell (HRSA, Division of Developmental Disabilities), and Jane Lanning (Special Commitment Center).

Using better business practices means better services

(Continued from page 3)

limited space for case file storage. Excessive time was being spent filing documents. Time spent filing translates into staff hours that could be redirected toward other collection activities.

The team's mission was to improve SEO case management efficiency by reducing the time and effort spent filing and searching for documents in unwieldy case files. They also sought to save support staff time spent filing unnecessary documents. Improvements made should save 8,353 hours per year and increase storage space by 50 percent.

Results

- Increased efficiency. (Time savings of 7,093 hours/year.)
- Increased effectiveness. (Time saved may be redirected toward other collection activities.)
- Increased space in the SEO workplace by 50 percent.
- Less time spent by the Case Archive Retrieval System (CARS) staff in microfilming documents for final disposition of case files. (Time savings of 1,260 hours/year.)

Team Members: Co-leaders: Ellen Wahlen and John Brandon. Members: Terry Trana, Dick Libbey, Joyce Connell, Peggy McNeil, Abby Michaels, Cheryl O'Grady, Bob Pearson, Becky Spitzer, Sharon Wescott and K.K. Wong.

CHANGING STAFFING SPEEDS CHILD SUPPORT PROCESSING

The State Disbursement Unit (SDU) within the Division of Child Support (DCS) is a federally-mandated operation that is required to process child support payments within two days of receipt. The unit processes about 115, 000 child support payment checks monthly, which accounts for 165,000 payments totalling approximately \$49 million.

Workflows fluctuate according to mail delivery, and on Monday mornings DCS receives 65 percent more checks than the remaining days. To stay current, DCS had resorted to using overtime on a regular basis. Once it became evident that the heavy-Monday workload was constant, the decision was made to add a second shift of regular employees.

The second shift operates on Monday and Tuesday evenings and consists of seven staff and one supervisor.

Results

- Achieved uninterrupted workflow for opening, scanning, indexing, and identifying payments Monday through Wednesday.
- Exceeded expectation of processing mail by Wednesday.
- Eliminated overtime to process payments, saving \$67,000 annually.
- Allowed processing staff to experiment with flex time, take scheduled holidays and participate in training sessions. Previously, staff felt pressure to catch up and often were asked to work on paid holidays.
- Eliminated many phone calls regarding payments (which also decreased the workload in the Headquarters Financial Services Unit and Community Relations Units, as well as support officers in the nine field offices).



Team members: (Back row,, from left) Patrick McGlennon, Charlie Hall, Dan Wilcox; (front row) Roberta Gerdts, Diana Young, Tom Kendrick, Betty Sutton, Linnie Larson, and Wendy Cole Deardorff. Not pictured: Tammy Dorfner, Laurie Rawlins, John Fry, Deloris Nichols, and Don Hawley

COUNTY COORDINATORS REACHED QUICKER THROUGH ListSERVE

Many of the 39 county alcohol and substance abuse prevention coordinators have e-mail, but some don't. Important FLASH notices and other fast turn-around communications required information to be faxed to each individual prevention coordinator. Each sending required several hours of staff time coordinating transmission and machine time processing faxes.



Team members: Earl Long (DASA), Kris Reed (University of Nevada-Reno), and Michael Langer (CAPT).

The Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) worked with the Western Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT) to develop a ListServe e-mail delivery system to communicate important news immediately to 31 of the 36 county prevention specialists and to all county coordinators.

Results

- Staff time was reduced from one to three hours per episode to less than one-half hour.
- Fax machine use was reduced from one to three hours per episode to less than one-half hour.
- Long distance SCAN calling expenses were substantially reduced.
- Prevention coordinators receive important information quickly, and can electronically reply and save the information in a useful format.

Ballard CSO
Over 95% food stamp error reduction

At the end of September, the Ballard Community Services Office, a mid-size full service office located in North Seattle, found that they had ended federal Quality Control program year with a food stamp error rate of 19 percent. This ranked them in the bottom third of all CSOs across the state for payment accuracy.

The Ballard CSO, a two-time applicant for the Washington State Quality Award, realized that it was time to apply quality processes to food stamp payment accuracy. In January 1999, a project team was formed with the office administrator acting in the role of a Quality Advisor and the financial supervisors working as team leaders. A goal was set whereby the CSO would meet or exceed state office requirements for payment accuracy of 93 percent. The team included line staff from financial, social services and clerical, as well as financial supervisors, so that Ballard could employ an office-wide approach to payment accuracy improvement.

Meeting each week, the process improvement team conducted brainstorming sessions in which potential solutions were developed, grouped where possible and voted on. Those receiving the most votes were worked on first.

Financial staff training was selected as a key area where significant long-term results could be achieved. The Process Improvement Team asked the financial leadworkers to form into a group to provide training to financial staff focusing on primary areas identified by Region 4 and the Audit 99 program as error prone. The leadworkers began providing training twice a month to all financial staff. Income, utilities, household composition and documentation are only a few of the areas that have been covered in depth.

Because the Ballard office provides same day service to clients, social workers provide coverage at the reception counters and clerical takes extra effort to handle phone calls.

Ballard's efforts have paid huge dividends. The 19 percent food stamp error rate of FY 98 has been reduced by over 95 percent to only .5 percent as of mid-September 1999. Establishing and maintaining quality processes requires a sizable investment of staff time and energy. However, the outcomes are worth it!



Sharing our successes and commitment to reaching beyond the expected to the excellent

Each of the eight administrations has steering committees to assist in leading the department's efforts to continue providing quality services to the residents of the state of Washington. For more information on the quality improvement activities occurring throughout the department, contact Cheryl Stephani, internal quality consultant, at (360) 902-7783 or e-mail at stephcs@dshs.wa.gov or Solomon Uwadiale, executive management consultant, at (360) 902-7649 or e-mail uwadism@dshs.wa.gov. Please visit the DSHS Intranet Quality Improvement site at intra.dshs.wa.gov/news.htm for ongoing updates of plans, successes, and accomplishments.

Some pleasant survey results...

(Continued from page 1)

Some expectations are:

- Expectations about the quality of service that they should get from state government are high. Forty-four percent expect better service from government than from the private sector. Fifty percent expect the same level of service.
- 94% said it was important to reach a real person rather than voice mail (82% said very important).
- Most preferred way to contact an agency is phone-66%, in person-24%, and Internet-6%.
- Acceptable time to wait for voice or e-mail return was one day.

- Acceptable time to wait for letter return was one week.

Some priority suggestions

- When asked about how accessible government services were, 86% were generally satisfied. But when asked how we could improve, 22% said be more easily reached by phone and 40% said to offer more ways of access (i.e., Internet, mail, phone, fax).
- 58% said to make it easier to find out how to get service.
- 32% want staff to be more competent and 31% asked to have more up-to-date information.

- When asked, 77% said they had access to a personal computer, 65% have access to the Internet and 56% use e-mail.
- There was no significant variability in the responses from the different geographic regions (western urban and rural areas and eastern urban and rural areas).
- Across the board, making it easier to find out how to get service was a leading recommendation on how to improve communications.

The Research and Data Division has compared the responses of people who used public assistance with the general population of government services users. Be sure to read the November NewsConnection for that report.

Open Doors in Tacoma ...

(continued from page 1)

Community Bus Tours

DCFS and UW community partners have taken part in four bus tours of the Eastside community. Tours were led by Pastor Ron Vignec, director of Salishan Eastside Lutheran Mission, a well-known local pastor and community advocate.

During these tours, DCFS staff learned about resources in the community they had not been aware of, such as meeting the only known Cambodian Episcopal minister in the United States, and seeing a Native American health clinic which offers faith healing as part of its services.

Increased collaboration between Family Support Centers and CPS

On July 21, CPS and Family Support Center staff who work in the Eastside area met to discuss ways they could better collaborate in the future. CPS workers learned about the many services offered by FSCs, and a risk assessment train-

ing was planned for Family Support workers.

This group has agreed to meet together on a quarterly basis to continue this collaboration in order to better serve families along the entire continuum of care.

Future activities

A series of multi-ethnic focus groups is planned for fall 1999, as well as an asset-mapping of the resources available through the Eastside's many faith communities. Family Support workers and CPS workers will continue to explore new ways of collaborating, including a possible "community liaison" linkage between FSCs and CPS.

If you would like more information about Open Doors, contact Larry Pedersen of Tacoma DCFS. For more information about the statewide Open Doors project and communication efforts, contact Rick Brandon at the University of Washington Human Services Policy Center: (206) 543-8483.

Masters' program seeks CA employee applicants

An innovative partnership between the Children's Administration and the state's Schools of Social Work funds employees who return to school to get their master's of social work. In return, employees agree to work for CA upon graduation for at least two years.

A key goal of the Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program (CWTAP) is to recruit people who are already working in CA and allow them to enrich their practice.

CWTAP is offered through several schools and at a variety of sites. The University of Washington has programs in Seattle and Tacoma, and a distance learning program on the Olympic Peninsula. Walla Walla College has a central academic program and serves students from a wide surrounding area through flexible practicum placement opportunities. Eastern Washington University has programs in Spokane, Yakima, and Everett.

For CA employees, practicum placements can be arranged at DSHS so that employment can continue uninterrupted.

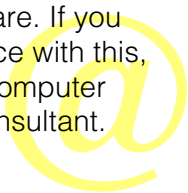
After completing the program, students are obligated to work at CA for about the same amount of time that they received funding.

Begin the application process now as most schools have winter deadlines. Because GRE scores are required for the UW programs, applicants should arrange to take the test in the fall. Preparation courses are available (contact Ivy Durslag for information). In addition, programs offer consultation to DSHS employees on writing a successful essay for the School of Social Work.

For more information, contact one of the following: Deborah Richey, Title IV-E supervisor, **Eastern Washington University**, (509) 359-6471; Pat McCollom, Title IV-E supervisor, **Eastern Washington University**, (509) 359-4265; Ivy Durslag, Seattle field unit supervisor, **University of Washington**, (206) 721-6865, or (206) 872-4030; Melanie Meyer, program manager, **UW Tacoma**, (253) 539-8165; or Doug Fleischer, Title IV-E director, **Walla Walla College**, (509) 527-2359.

The News Connection is online

The News Connection is available on the DSHS Internet and Intranet home pages. The Internet address is <http://www.wa.gov/dshs> The Intranet address is <http://intra.dshs.wa.gov/> The newsletter is available in both PDF and text only formats. In order to view the PDF (portable document format) file, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. It is free software. If you need assistance with this, contact your computer information consultant.



Diversity Calendar

Throughout the year *The News Connection* features special dates, provided by the Division of Access and Equal Opportunity. If you have a date you would like included in the calendar, contact Patte King at KingPL@dshs.wa.gov. Not all dates can be included because of length constraints.

OCTOBER

NATIONAL DISABILITIES MONTH

- 2 Ghandi's Birthday
- 6 US: German American Day
- 11 Columbus Day
- Canadian Thanksgiving
- Mohammed's Birthday
- 15 National White Cane Day
- 16 World Food Day
- 17 Black Poetry Day
- 18 Jamaica Heroes Day
- 24 United Nations Day
- 26 International Red Cross Day
- 27 International Creole Day
- 28 Greek National Day
- 31 Halloween

NOVEMBER

NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT MONTH

- 1 All Saint's Day
- 2 Election Day
- Mexico Day of the Dead
- 3 Japan Culture Day
- 7 Marie Curie's Birthday
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 14 India: Children's Day
- 16 Scotland: Feast of St. Margaret
- 17 England: Queen Elizabeth Day
- 18 Latvia: Independence Day
- 20 U.N. Rights of the Child Day
- 24 Hmong New Year Day
- 25 Thanksgiving Day
- 26 State holiday
- Sojourner Truth Day
- 30 Barbados: Independence Day

Trick or treat?



That's what we need to ask beer brewers this Halloween as they gear up for another holiday of tempting young kids with their alcoholic products.

Halloween is now the third biggest party day for the beer industry, coming in right behind New Year's Eve and the Superbowl. This is due in large part to all the giveaways and promotions that beer manufacturers use to help people associate Halloween with beer drinking.

All the major brewers, including Anheuser-Busch, Stroh, Miller and Coors use Halloween images to promote beer sales. Last year a beer ad appeared in the Yakima newspaper featuring a cartoon witch with this message: "Remember ... all good boys and gouls drink responsibly." This type of advertising, along with point-of-sale stickers, masks, balloons and temporary tattoos of ghosts, goblins, jack-o-lanterns and witches, is doing a good job of getting kids' attention. Middle and high school students consume 1.1 billion cans of beer each year.

Not only does underage drinking increase a teen's risk of having drinking problems or alcoholism as an adult, alcohol-related car crashes are the leading cause of death for young people aged 15-24.

In response to increasing beer promo-

tions on Halloween, a national coalition of alcohol prevention advocates is urging the beer industry to take its hands off Halloween and stop exploiting images that appeal to children.

As part of the "Hands Off Halloween" campaign each year, local advocates ask merchants to take a stand for children by refusing to display Halloween-themed beer promotions in their stores. This is something all concerned parents can do in their communities.

Parents can also help their children avoid using and misusing alcohol by:

- Talking with them about the real effects and consequences of alcohol use
- Having clear standards and expectations for underage alcohol use
- Setting a good example. If you drink, let your child see you drink moderate amounts that don't result in intoxication (one drink per day for women, two drinks for men).

For more information about the "Hands Off Halloween" campaign, contact Deb Schnellman at (360) 438-8799 or e-mail: schneda@dshs.wa.gov.

For more information on how to take action see the Web site www.traumafdn.org/alcohols/ads